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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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CIA/ONE/STAFF MLM/41-61

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

28 July 1961

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 41-61 (Internal ONE Working Paper -
CIA Distribution Only)

SUBJECT: Aftermath of the Kuwait Crisis*

1. It is now a month since Iraqi Premier 'Abd-al-Karim Qasim jolted the Arab World [REDACTED] announcing that he was appointing the Shaykh of Kuwait Qa'imaqam of the Kuwait District of Basra Province, and by implying he would back up this appointment with force if necessary. Reactions to Qasim's statement came promptly from all interested parties. The Iraqi Foreign Office, which had not previously been consulted, worked vigorously to document Iraq's legal claim to Kuwait. The UAR, with diplomatic astuteness, led the campaign to keep Kuwait's \$400 million a year from Qasim.

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[REDACTED]

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Kuwait

[REDACTED]

requested

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UK assistance.

[REDACTED]

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2. The situation has now quieted down. More than half of the British troops have departed, leaving some 2,000 in Kuwait. Qasim has re-stated his claim but with assurances that he does not intend to use force. The Arab League, after attempting to sweep the problem under the carpet, has admitted Kuwait to membership. Iraq has once again boycotted the League's activities but has not left it outright. In some fashion or other, the Arab states will probably contrive to keep the situation quiet, possibly by sending token forces to Kuwait.

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[REDACTED]

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THE UAR

3. The UAR, which did not want to see Iraq annex Kuwait nor to antagonize the Kuwaitis and least of all did not want to be seen on the same side of the conflict as the UK, neither gained nor lost significantly. The UAR probably is in better repute in Kuwait from having helped to keep Kuwait free of Iraqi clutches. The UAR was able to line up all the other League states against Iraq to secure the admission of Kuwait. Nasser probably hopes for some gratitude from Kuwait in the form of financial aid, but he is not likely to get much. He has improved his posture as a nationalist symbol without unnecessarily offending the conservative Arab governments.

IRAQ

4. Once again Qasim demonstrated his unique, individual, Qasimistic view of the real world. His threat to put the Shaykh in forced residence in northern Iraq if he did not submit and his promise to build schools and hospitals for Kuwait -- which has both in a quality and splendor the Iraqis never dreamed of -- made him look rather foolish. While many Iraqis do indeed believe that Kuwait belongs to them and that they would benefit mightily

-3-

SECRET

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from its money, they were surprised by the manner and brusqueness of Qasim's announcement. Qasim also violated one of the unwritten canons of Arab nationalism -- that unity should be achieved because people want it (or are made to seem to want it) and not by outright annexation. Most other Arab states, support what Nasser calls "the logic of unity, but not the logic of annexation." Formal aggression by Arabs on their brothers is a capital sin in the political lexicon of the mid-twentieth century Arab World.

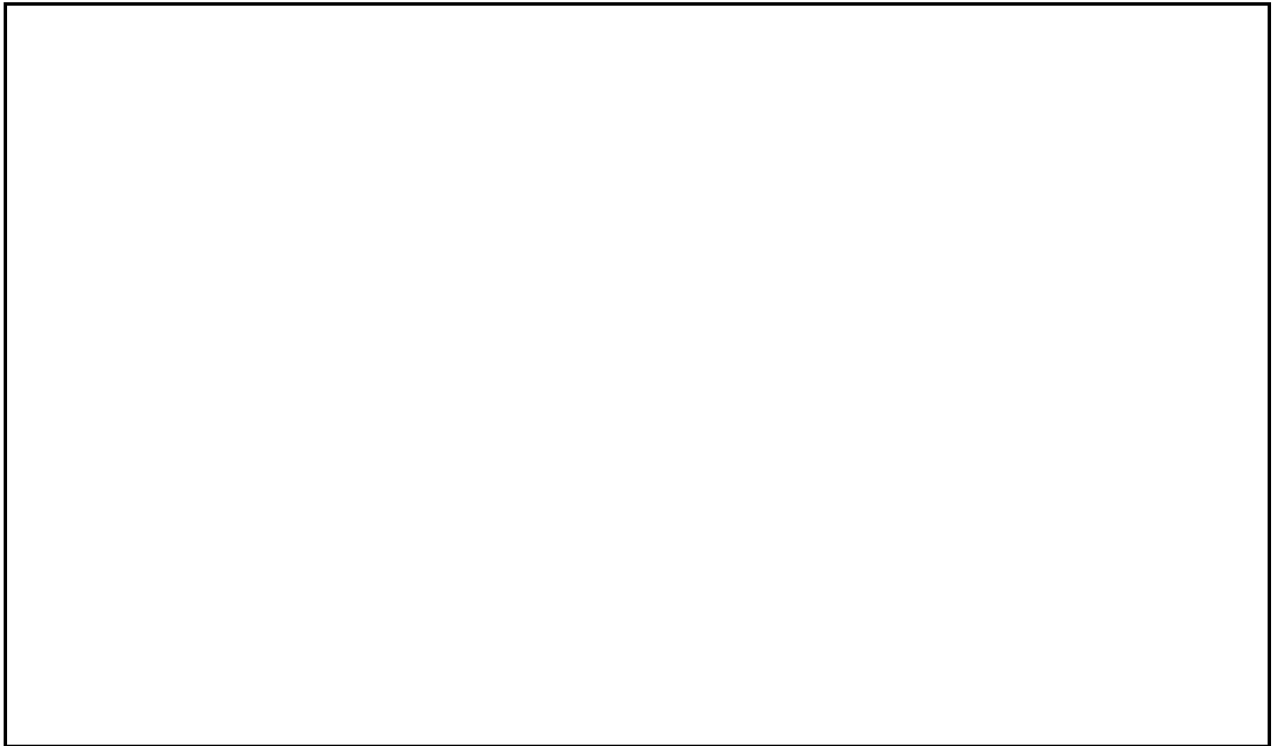
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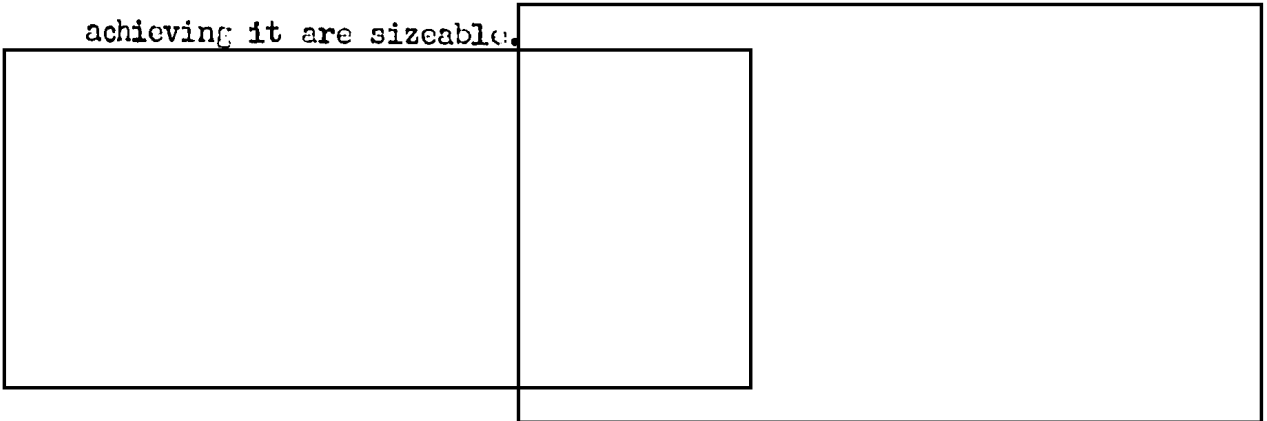
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7. Iraqi officials, including Foreign Minister Jawad, have indicated cautiously that they might be interested in an Iraq-Jordan-Kuwait Federation. An attempt to build such a federation would not have as much odium as if Iraq tried to keep all Kuwait's wealth for itself. However, Qasim is the Iraqi government and we have heard nothing of how he views such a political union. Even if he did like the idea, the practical problems in achieving it are sizeable.

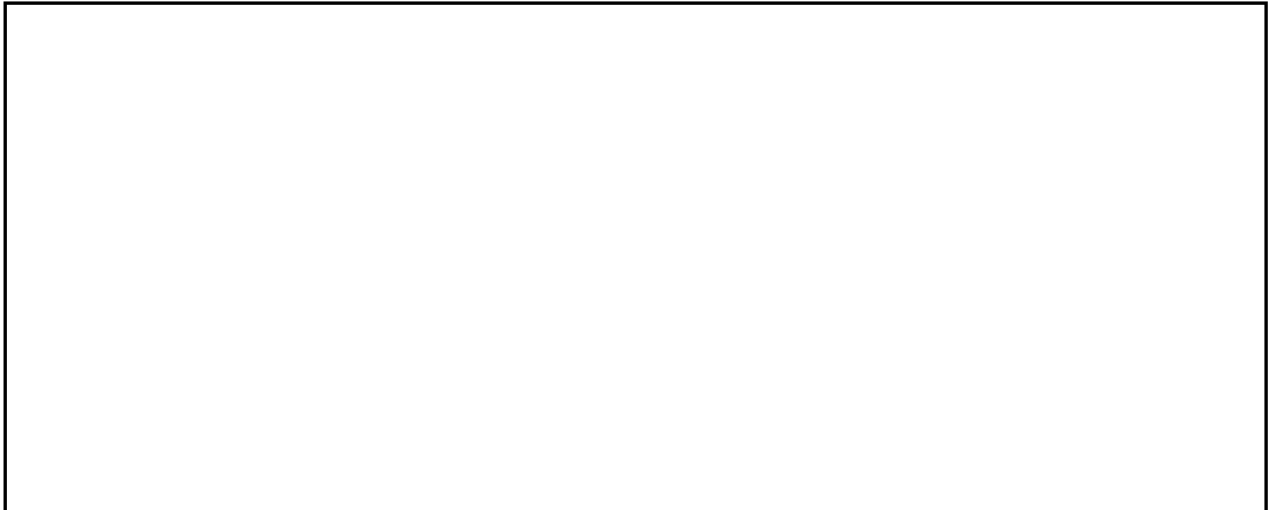
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KUWAIT

8. The Iraqi threat has catapulted Kuwait into the midst of Arab League and international affairs far faster than the Kuwaitis had expected or are prepared for. Kuwait will be represented in Arab affairs as an independent country. Kuwait will have difficulty in finding enough Kuwaitis to fill the variety of posts brought on by sudden prominence in Arab and world affairs. But one lesson Kuwait should have learned from this is that they stand to gain considerably by spreading some of their wealth around through loans to other Arab states, participation in Arab development schemes and the like. Kuwait is fairly safe as long as Iraq and the UAR are enemies.



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-6-

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